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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9604
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0008
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 1029
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0039
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 000789

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WHA/CEN, NEA/I

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TAGS: PGOV PINR KDEM NU PREL IZ
SUBJECT: NICARAGUA REACHES OUT TO IRAQ

REF: MANAGUA 0179

Classified By: Ambassador Paul A. Trivelli. Reasons 1.4 (B,D).

¶11. (C) Ambassador Magda Henriquez, the Director of the Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry's Multilateral Affairs Office, informed PolCouns on March 23 that she had met last week with Iraqi Ambassador to the United Nations, Hamid Al-Biyati, as a first step towards renewing diplomatic ties between the two countries. Henriquez reported that Al-Biyati appeared to be very pleased with the GON's approchement, noting she was impressed by the Iraqi Ambassador's intelligence and breadth of knowledge. She also took advantage of the meeting to pitch Nicaragua's bid for a seat on the UN Human Rights Commission.

¶12. (C) Background/Comment: Although the Nicaraguan government (GON) never formally broke its diplomatic ties with Iraq, it has not maintained them for years. Last year, we encouraged Nicaragua's previous Foreign Minister Norman Caldera to consider renewing the GON's ties with Iraq, starting perhaps with a meeting between the two countries' UN ambassadors. Although Caldera appeared receptive to the idea, to our knowledge, he took no action. In January we raised the idea with newly installed Foreign Minister Samuel Santos, who also appeared interested in our suggestion (Reftel), and in late February with Henriquez, who assured us she would meet with al-Biyati when she traveled to New York the week of March 12. The GON has never established an embassy in Baghdad and Henriquez believes it is unlikely to do so anytime in the near future. However, its interest in restoring diplomatic channels is encouraging.

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